

ADDRESS BY POSTMASTER GENERAL LAWRENCE F. O'BRIEN, AT THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCE, DEPARTMENTAL AUDITORIUM, WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPTEMBER 22, 1967, 3:30 P.M.

I am delighted to be here with you at this first national Equal Employment Opportunity Conference to share with you what I fully expect will be many significant accomplishments.

Before I came here today, President Johnson asked me to give you his greetings and to bring you this message:

"On August 30, the Senate of the United States confirmed my choice of a new Associate Justice of the Supreme Court," the President said. "I believe history will record this action as a monument to opportunity in America, a day on which we became more of what we hope to be, more American than we have been before. Before taking this position of great influence and honor, this giant of the legal profession had represented the people of the United States in cases before the Supreme Court, and before that his eloquence in behalf of equal opportunity helped produce one of the great moments in the development of our free society—the case of *Brown versus Board of Education*, which struck a blow at the very foundation of inequality and discrimination.

"Thurgood Marshall, the first American Negro to join the Supreme Court of our land, is both a symbol of what can be achieved in a land of opportunity and of what new opportunities are being created by and for all our citizens."

And then, the President added: "None of us is born equal. Every man is different in some degree. All have something to offer to the society in which they live. Too often that potential has been distorted or denied by artificial restraints and barricades. Once the barricade of discrimination is fully destroyed, once the restraints that have denied equal opportunity are fully cut away, then can all men show their true powers and abilities, then can men of every race and creed and color and national origin rise as far as their abilities will take them. Then will our nation have tapped new sources of leadership and creative energy—and we will all be richer and more important, better and more American."

That's the President's message for those of us here today. Ladies and gentlemen, equal opportunity in this day and age is no longer something desirable; it is an absolute basic necessity.

The whole history of this nation, if it tells us anything, tells that we are a people marching along a road—the road toward social justice and human dignity. There have been many landmarks on that road, and the road itself has twisted and turned, has detoured, and has been full of potholes and ruts. But the course of that road has always been upward. First, we had to achieve our own national independence, our own dignity, and identity as a people. Then, the ranks of those who participated in running their government had to be extended, sometimes only after a long struggle. In my own State of Massachusetts, I saw how the sons of Ireland, and Italy, and Poland had to fight for their right to equality and opportunity.

Of course, it would be foolish to say that the goal of political equality has been fully achieved. Even today there is a long way to go. But no one, I think, can deny that the pace has quickened. In the last 11 years 5 important Civil Rights laws have broken down barriers that have blocked the road since the dawn of our nation.

But political equality, though basic, is simply not enough. There must also be social justice, there must be economic justice. And, in my view, this conference marks another forward step in the achievement of economic and social justice.

Some years ago, I heard a story that illuminates the reason why we here in America have been able to move upward along the road of political, economic, and social justice.

It is a story told by the historian Max Lerner. Professor Lerner was speaking before a hostile audience in a Communist country. "Mr. Lerner," he was asked, "can you sum up in one word the meaning of America?"

Lerner had just completed a massive, two-volume study of American Civilization.

He replied, "I have written several hundreds of thousands of words on this very subject—and you want it all summed up in one word?"

"Yes," the speaker demanded. "One word." Then Lerner explained. "The meaning of said, 'The meaning of America is access.'"

The Communist audience was stunned. "We have heard of American success, but never of American access," one of them said.

Then Lerner explained. "The meaning of America is that every man, if he works, if he tries and tries again, then has, through his own effort, seized the key to a door. And that door opens onto access to wealth, and success, and power, and knowledge."

That is why this conference is so important—it is a celebration of access already achieved. It is reaffirmation of our commitment to achieve full access for every postal employee and potential postal employee.

Let us hold that concept of access in mind for a moment as we think of a slogan we hear quite often nowadays.

I refer, of course, to the slogan "Black Power."

If by black power we mean a drive among American Negroes for a new sense of dignity, and purpose, and identity, we can all agree that is our goal.

And, I think that is what black power must mean, and should mean.

May I say that in this sense of increasing self-respect, and the ability to participate in self-government which can only rest in self respect, I am also in favor of white power, and Irish power, and Polish power, and Spanish-American power, and Indian power, and, of course, it goes without saying, of woman power.

Being for woman power is just prudence. I remember working with an ardent lady Democrat years ago on a rough, tough political campaign.

"Aren't you afraid to stand on a street corner and work for Roosevelt?" I asked.

She looked me right in the eye and replied, "I have no fear. I put my trust in the Lord. She will protect me."

This is a country big enough for all kinds of power. Everytime a new group breaks through, gets access to power, it makes our America a better place, and a more dynamic land. It does more, too. It makes us come closer to the ideals we all profess, and sometimes even try to live up to.

There is more wasted energy of mind and body and spirit locked up in America's minorities than in our whole arsenal of atomic weapons.

Let's unlock that energy. Let's harness it for the general good, the good of Americans of all races and colors. Let a new sense of dignity help encourage all our citizens to open the door of access.

Let a new sense of dignity help all of us see that whether we live on a farm or in the heart of the city, we are part of one nation, indivisible, and there is no future for the nation, no future for any of us, unless there is a future for every citizen.

We are doing everything possible to provide a decent future for all our employees. We have opened the door to access wider than it has been opened since the days of Benjamin Franklin.

My friends, access to opportunity is no less than the key to achievement of the American dream.

President Johnson is pledged to solve the problems that beset this nation in the American way, not by the repressive tactics being suggested by some men of little vision, but by clearing out every last barrier to equal opportunity.

Our nation still has blemishes. How could it be any different? For we are a living experiment. We are at the very frontier of every advance in science, in human relations, in social life. If a new problem comes to the attention of the world, such as the urban crisis, nine times out of ten we can say, "It started here first." Leadership and comfort are often strangers in a time of revolutionary change, when today's truth may be tomorrow's error, when the jest—"if it works it's obsolete"—is just too true to be good.

We are still the world's greatest melting pot.

We are a nation of many races, creeds, and national origins.

We span a continent. We spill out into the Pacific. We have a partnership with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the Atlantic.

We did not ask to be the guardians at the gate, but no other nation of the Free World has the power to stop the spread of terror and violence abroad.

And, here at home, we see that problems, too long neglected, conditions too long overlooked, tensions too long festering, have exploded into violence that benefits no one, Negro or white, violence that merely strengthens the hand of extremists of both races.

I want to take a few moments to remind you of the efforts that have been made in the past few years, in the Postal Service, and in the nation at large, to provide greater opportunities for all our citizens, opportunities to learn, opportunities to live in a decent environment, opportunities to express grievances in the American way through the ballot box rather than with the fire bomb.

I'm proud of how we have followed the lead of President Kennedy and President Johnson in the Post Office Department.

The Post Office Department recognizes one standard and one standard alone in hiring, in promotion—and that is the American Standard of ability.

On the basis of advice from our employee organizations and other concerned leaders, President Johnson and I have taken a number of steps to assure that this American Standard of equal opportunity will exist not alone in Washington, not alone in our 15 Regional Offices, not alone in our largest cities, but in every one of our 33,000 post offices and in every postal installation in the country.

For the first time, we have upgraded our Office of Equal Employment Opportunities to a separate division in the Bureau of Personnel. We have named five field coordinators to strengthen this program throughout our postal regions.

And, to assure that no area is overlooked, we are holding this Equal Employment Opportunities Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, every one of us can take pride in the fact that our postal service is a leader among all Federal agencies in equal employment. We now employ 130,000 members of minority groups, a figure that constitutes almost 20% of our total employment.

The best possible proof of our progress toward achieving maximum access to opportunity is the fact that in the ten largest cities of the United States the percentage of non-white postal employees exceeds, and often exceeds by a considerable percentage, the percentage of the total non-white population.

Though we have come far in recent years, you know that we are not sitting still.

We are not getting our exercise by resting on our laurels or patting ourselves on the back.

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Rather, we intend to build on the momentum we have gained. We intend to assure that every post office in the land meets the American Standard. We intend to run a postal service that not only serves a democratic people but that serves them in a truly democratic way. We intend to insure that the vast reservoir of postal employment opportunity is made accessible to those disadvantaged Americans willing and able to join with us in providing this nation with a superlative postal service. And, finally, we intend to call upon the tremendous respect and influence commanded by our nation's postal officials to provide leadership in equal opportunity efforts within their communities.

There is no doubt that we have come far in extending equal opportunity in the postal service.

But we are all Americans as well as postal employees.

Greater opportunities in the postal service can only exist in the context of a nation that extends greater opportunity in every area of life.

And I think we must recognize how President Kennedy and President Johnson have succeeded in opening up new opportunities for all our people.

In the basic area of education, we have seen created, in a four year period, more legislation for our schools—24 separate measures—than in the previous 178 years of our national history. These education programs run from funds to improve primary education to scholarships that enable students to enter college. The door to opportunity through education is wider than ever before. And I can assure you that the President is going to fight every effort to close that door.

President Johnson is pledged to a program to give every American the opportunity to live in a healthful, decent environment, where the streets will be safe, the air clean, the transportation swift, the homes a source of satisfaction, the way to the ballot box open to all. That is why he has mounted the greatest attack on air pollution in our history; that is why he proposed the most massive Federal anti-crime program in our history; that is why he has undertaken the greatest rapid mass transportation program in our history; that is why he broke new ground in rebuilding our cities. His Model Cities and Rent Supplements programs are bold new ideas to combat the decay that has turned far too many of our cities into drab deserts.

America has problems. Plenty of them. But we also have a priceless resource: a vigorous, striving, imaginative people—the same kind of people that built a civilization from a wilderness, won the battle against the most evil tyrannies since Attila, restored shattered nations overseas, solved the mystery of the atom, and is now reaching out into space.

We have solved our problems in the past and, in fact, translated difficulties into opportunities.

And President Johnson has said concerning equal opportunity in the Federal Government:

"As long as any American is denied the chance to fully develop and use his talents, to become all that he can, then every American is less than he should be. If race, skin color, religious beliefs, sex, or national origin prevent anyone from reaching the heights, then we have all wasted a human being. We have failed that person, and, finally, we have failed our country."

My friends, none of us can afford to fail our country.

If we reject the advice of frightened men, men of little faith in the American system, if we push on to new solutions, then the days of frustration, of antagonism, of violence through which we now pass will be

seen for what they are: the alarm, waking us up to do what needs to be done, what should be done, and, given vision, leadership, and ability, what will be done. We shall not fail!

U.S. POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL

(Mr. FARBSTEIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FARBSTEIN. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely disturbed by the turn that the U.S. policy toward Israel has appeared to take in recent days. The standard objective of the United States is to seek peace and stability in the Middle East. But our acts and statements in the last few days have given comfort to the forces determined on instability in that region and have encouraged them in their irresponsible ways.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Government of Jordan has contributed both morally and materially to the appalling rise of terrorism against Israel in past weeks. All evidence indicates that Arab saboteurs are being armed in Jordan. The Jordanian radio continues to incite the Arab people to rise up against Israel, although the Israel Government is doing everything possible to provide decent conditions of life for peaceful Arabs under its jurisdiction.

Yet, what has been the response of the United States to this gross irresponsibility on Jordan's part? Our Government resumes economic assistance to the Jordanian Government. Presumably, we will go back to giving Jordan, as we have in the past, the substantial sum of \$27 million a year. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if this decision by the United States must not be interpreted as an acquiescence in Jordan's aggressive conduct, its agitation, its determination that there shall be no peace in the Middle East. I deplore the restoration of aid to Jordan and I deeply protest it.

Now I note, Mr. Speaker, that our Government has taken another step to give comfort to the troublemakers in the Middle East. Yesterday, at the U.N., Ambassador Goldberg sternly chided Israel for establishing settlements in territory taken from the Arabs in the June war.

I remind our Government, Mr. Speaker, that Israel did not ask for that war. It certainly did not ask for the territories lost by the Arab armies in that war. It does not now ask to keep them. Israel has asked only that the Arabs sit down at the peace table and discuss a settlement of the recent conflict including the disposition of all the territories—except east Jerusalem—that changed hands during the conflict. Israel has asked only peace and security.

But the Arabs have shown greater interest in maintaining the state of war than in reclaiming their losses.

What does our Government expect Israel to do, Mr. Speaker? Are those territories to lie fallow indefinitely, to indulge Arab whimsies? I submit that the premise of Ambassador Goldberg's presumptuous criticism is absurd. If the territory is there, it must be used. Hopefully, Israel's using it will help to bring some sense to an otherwise senseless situation. All that Ambassador Goldberg does by

his recent statements is to comfort the Arabs for not negotiating peace. I find the Ambassador's statements unwise and unjustified, and I deeply protest them.

Mr. Speaker, I detect the seeds of a policy seriously prejudicial to Israel in the action of the past few days. I suggest that our Government put a stop to this tendency at once. I do not think the American people will stand for it and, furthermore, I regard it as foolish and dangerous.

DALLAS TIMES HERALD COMPLIMENTS PRESIDENT JOHNSON

(Mr. CABELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and to include an editorial.)

Mr. CABELL. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues a recent editorial in the Dallas Times Herald complimenting President Johnson on his speech to the International Conference of Police Chiefs in Kansas City.

The President recognized that political and legal responsibilities must be accepted along with the extension of social rights.

Riots in the street serve only to tear down rather than restructure the fabric of society. As the Times Herald notes with approval, quoting the President, riots damage "the respect and accommodation among men on which a civilized society ultimately depends, and without which there can be no progress toward social justice."

Riots bring dissension not constructive decision. They produce agony not mutual agreement.

I include the Dallas Times Herald editorial lauding the President's strong stand against civil disorders in the RECORD:

PRIME PROVOCATION

There was no doubt as to the object of President Johnson's wrath during his recent speech to police chiefs convening in Kansas City. He did not have to name Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown for them to be recognizable as the "wretched, vulgar men" . . . the "poisonous propagandists" who "posed as spokesmen for the underprivileged and capitalized on the real grievances of the suffering people."

The President's denunciation, the stoutest he has uttered during a season of mounting urban violence, accurately blames the demagogic proponents of Black Power for igniting much of this summer's flaming disorder. The Chief Executive's tone, evident to those who heard broadcasts of his speech, properly reflected the growing national anger over the factious rantings of Carmichael, Brown and company.

"The violence of this summer," Johnson told the police officials (many of whom scarcely needed to be reminded), "raised up a new threat to local law enforcement. It spawned a group of men whose interests lay in provoking others to destruction while they fled its consequences."

The riots did more than material damage, the President said. "They damaged the respect and accommodation among men on which a civilized society ultimately depends, and without which there can be no progress toward social justice." This country cannot tolerate "behavior that destroys what generations of men and women have built here in America—no matter what stimulates their behavior, no matter what is offered to justify it."